

# Status Report On Achievement Plus Initiative at Dayton's Bluff Elementary

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## Overview

Achievement Plus, a comprehensive school reform initiative, was established at Dayton's Bluff Elementary in the summer of 1997. It is currently operating at three schools in East St. Paul, and all three sites function as full-service neighborhood community schools providing students and their families with integrated academic, recreation, community, and health services on site. The emphasis is on integrated services, family and community involvement, and academic achievement. In contrast to most community school programs in the country, Achievement Plus has focused on raising academic achievement as its number one goal. The theory of action underlying this goal is that student achievement will be raised significantly through increased family and community involvement, and comprehensive integrated services and programs that support the students and their families. The mission statement produced by the initiative states:

**Achievement Plus** is committed to the success of each child and the systems that surround the child. Through the efforts of **Achievement Plus**, the barriers to success will be identified, strategies will be developed and resources will be redirected to address the barriers. The spirit created will be one in which the whole community shares in the responsibility and the celebration of every student's success.

Perhaps, the most unique feature of the initiative is its governance structure: a public-private partnership comprised of Amherst Wilder Foundation, St. Paul Public Schools, City of St. Paul, Ramsey County, and the State of Minnesota. This partnership arrangement presents challenges to the initiative from both an organizational and educational perspective. First, from an organizational perspective, lines of responsibility and accountability are still not yet well defined. The orientations of the different service providers make it difficult to coordinate, manage, and integrate services effectively. Moreover, with multiple service providers sharing responsibility for academic achievement, strategies and activities may not always be closely aligned with stated goals. Second, it is questionable whether or not integrated services can contribute significantly to raising student academic achievement. Third, how can the impact of integrated social services on academic achievement be accurately measured?

At the management level, the key partners intend to raise student achievement by working to **(1)** Increase the number of educational and social services available to children and families **(2)** Improve the integration and coordination of services offered **(3)** Improve the quality and rigor of classroom expectations and practices **(4)** Blend, reallocate, and target public and private resources **(5)** Rethink and improve public policies, practices, and systems that affect children, and **(6)** Share accountability for children's education among stakeholders. At the site level, a set of goals and indicators have been developed that support the primary goal of raising academic achievement. Ongoing formative evaluation of the initiative is periodically conducted by Wilder employees. These more specific program goals, indicators and associated outcomes are examined in later sections.

Funding for the Achievement Plus initiative is provided through many non-profit foundations as well as the state, county, city, and federal governments. According to an

*Achievement Plus program review* completed in December 1999 by Policy Studies Associates, Inc., overall operating and capital support by fall 1999 totaled nearly \$41.5 million. The Wilder Foundation, which initiated Achievement Plus, serves as the partnership's fiscal agent. Wilder has also served as the managing partner since the beginning of the initiative, although a letter included with the program review from the foundation's president indicates that St. Paul Public Schools will assume the leadership role for "bringing Achievement Plus to the next stage of its development."

Some of the challenges apparent at Dayton's Bluff Elementary are common to interventions of this magnitude, whereas others are probably more closely related to the specific context. Due to the unique structure of the partnership, efficient collaboration among partners has not been fully developed. Poor communication and coordination at the management level have contributed to an environment of confusion and frustration at the site level. Lack of support and commitment to the process from teachers is a continuing problem at Dayton's Bluff. Information from a site based needs assessment indicates that there has been substantial resistance to the implementation of the America's Choice curriculum from many teachers. Communication between the partnership's governance structure and teachers was not a high priority in the beginning stages of the initiative, and lines of authority may have been established without adequate input and representation from teachers, staff, and the community in the decision making process. Some stakeholders have indicated that community, staff, and family members of the site council are, for the most part, not actively involved in making key decisions regarding budgets, hiring, curriculum, or allocation of resources. Furthermore, many staff feel the school climate has deteriorated drastically during the past two years. Not surprisingly, student and family outcomes have failed to materialize as quickly as originally anticipated. The most troubling outcome for many stakeholders has been the downward trend of several key indicators, such as test scores, over the past several years.

There are also strengths and successes evident at Dayton's Bluff. The initiative was initially well conceived, and benefits from a solid base of research in academic best practices, staff development, and strategic planning. Key components of the initiative, such as extended day programs and the family resource centers, are basically functioning as planned. Community partners have also established a variety of successful programs. Key partners, community partners, and various advisers provide expertise in addressing social service needs on-site. Perhaps most importantly, sufficient public and private funding and other resources have so far been readily available to maintain and expand services and programs.

## **Introduction**

The main purpose of this report is to provide key community stakeholders with information about the primary goals, objectives, and components of the Achievement Plus model at Dayton's Bluff Elementary, and the degree to which designated outcomes have been obtained. The information presented here is mainly a synthesis and summary of relevant documents, reports, and evaluations. Within a framework that explores goals, inputs, and program components, student and family outcomes were examined. Indicators such as test scores, attendance and participation were used whenever possible. However, requested information on implementation,

specific programs and activities, and output data relating to student and family outcomes was frequently unavailable. Wherever lack of information was an issue throughout the report, specific questions were posed to guide the investigation and inform possible future efforts.

The following questions were initially explored in gathering and focusing information for this report. Although a formal evaluation was beyond the scope of this project, and specific information was frequently unavailable, many of these questions were addressed briefly as they relate to overall student and family outcomes at Dayton's Bluff Achievement Plus Elementary.

1. What are the stated goals of the program? How were desired outcomes determined?
2. What are the components of Achievement Plus at Dayton's Bluff? Which programs are operated by Achievement Plus, and which by community partners?
3. What are the key characteristics of the program as perceived by various stakeholders (staff, community partners, families, Dayton's Bluff community stakeholders)?
4. What do participants actually do in the program? What are their primary activities? What do they experience? (Participants include students, families, and other members of the community utilizing Achievement Plus resources.) How is participation and continuity measured for family activities and programs?
5. What do participants like and dislike? What are their perceptions of what's working and not working?
6. How well are staff functioning together? What are their perceptions about what's working and not working? What challenges and barriers have emerged? What's working as expected? How do they feel about participants, administrators, their own roles and effectiveness?
7. What is the connection between the curriculum, and the programs and services offered at Dayton's Bluff?
8. What is the role of the site council in the decision making process? Is diversity sufficiently represented? Do all key stakeholder groups have adequate representation?
9. What are the start-up and continuing costs of implementing the initiative?
10. Has implementation proved effective and consistent based on student and family outcomes? Is Achievement Plus on track to meeting its goals and objectives?

## **Program Theory and Mission of Achievement Plus**

At the heart of any implementation strategy lays the question: What series of activities must occur before there is reason to even hope that impact will result? In order to answer this question, it is helpful to briefly consider the program theory underlying the stated mission, goals, and objectives of the intervention. The Achievement Plus initiative is based on the full-service community school service model of the Children's Aid Society (CAS) community schools in New York. The basic philosophy of CAS is stated as: *educational excellence, combined with needed human services, delivered through school, parent and community partnerships*. The strategy is to build the school-community partnerships that bring teachers, parents and community agencies together to ensure that every child enters the classroom ready to learn.

In the Achievement Plus document titled "Project at a Glance", there are two main components essential for achieving the primary goal of raising the level of student achievement: **(1)** Extensive parent and community involvement, and **(2)** integrating academic, health, social and recreational services for children and families during the school day and evening, weekends and school vacations. These two elements comprise the theory of action underlying the initiative. They must be successfully implemented before intended outcomes can occur.

A 1998 "Achievement Plus News" document states:

"Achievement Plus is a partnership with parents and communities. In addition to the formal partners' role, parental and community collaboration are at the core of Achievement Plus' mission to raise academic achievement. Parents will have access to the necessary resources and guidance to help them support their children's learning efforts."

Available evidence indicates, however, that rather than a partnership with parents, Dayton's Bluff employs a top-down client centered approach toward parents and the community. A genuine interest in collaborative partnerships with parents and community stakeholders would generate other approaches. It is essential for management to clarify the theory of action behind the initiative: Is the purpose to engage families, teachers, and the community as collaborative partners in the decision making process, or primarily to provide services to families, in the hopes that they will respond in certain ways and student achievement will improve (or both)? Clearly, implementing the first option is more complicated than merely providing an array of services. It is associated with vision and the quality of leadership at the site level, and will ultimately be reflected in the school culture.

## **Funding and Allocations**

As noted in the *Policy Studies Associates* report, by fall of 1999, the Minnesota Legislature had appropriated \$6.3 million for program operations (for Dayton's Bluff and Monroe sites) by fall of 1999. In 1997 \$3.3 million dollars was appropriated for fiscal year 1998, and in 1999 \$3.0 million dollars for fiscal year 2000, with carryover authority into fiscal year 2001. Information specifying the exact amount allocated to each site was not available.

Other public contributors of capital funding, totaling \$10.7 million for the same time period, included the city of St. Paul, Ramsey County, and the school district. These funds were in addition to the per-pupil funding contributed by SPPS. Dozens of private foundations contributed to the initiative as well. The Wilder Foundation contributed \$1.6 million and several other foundations awarded operating grants, including the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (\$600,000), the McKnight Foundation (\$880,000), the Bush Foundation (\$1.6 million), and Honeywell (\$100,000).

Costs at Dayton's Bluff are delineated in the *SCIP report* for the 2000-2001 school year. The report outlines all workplan activities along with the estimated cost of implementation. The total cost of all activities represented in the report for the 2001 school year is approximately \$3,059,125.

### **Program Components and Activities**

**Note:** No specific information was available in Achievement Plus literature on the many programs operated by community partners at Dayton's Bluff Elementary.

The *SCIP report* lists the most distinctive features at Dayton's Bluff Achievement Plus:

- Specialists in the areas of art, music, physical education, and science
- SEM (school-wide enrichment program) specialist provides enrichment, challenging activities, academic contests
- Media center: Contains 20,000 books, computer lab with 30 internet connected Macintosh G3 computers; staffed by both a media specialist and technology teacher. There is daily computer instruction, and laptops for students to take home.
- Newly completed recreation center: Includes new theater, dance facility, second gym with bleachers, new computer lab, additional opportunities for sports, recreation, and community education
- Extended day programs before and after school: Activities focus on homework and are related to classroom learning.
- Family events and a Family Resource Center where information about community resources are available for parents and community.

The physical, social, and academic resources and programs available at Dayton's Bluff Achievement Plus Elementary School offer potentially valuable options for raising student achievement. Many opportunities exist for improving academic achievement, and supporting the social and physical well being of students and families. However, in an intervention as comprehensive and complex as Achievement Plus, integration and coordination of all components are essential for success in achieving any of the mutually supportive and interdependent goals. Some of the key elements of Achievement Plus are described below:

### Extended day programming before and after school:

Much time and effort has been spent on implementing and expanding extended day programming, a major component of the Achievement Plus initiative. Early Start programming starts one and a half hours before the regular school day. The program is focused strictly on academics with attention to homework assistance and completion, tutoring, and/or reading. Students have access to computers and library resources. Staff includes classroom teachers, an English language (ELL) teacher, a Reading Recovery specialist, community college students, and teacher aides.

After-school programs generally run from 3 to 5:30 p.m. and include 45 minutes of academic instruction for all participants, provided solely by classroom teachers, followed by enrichment and recreation. The extended day program also provides academic and recreational activities from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays when school is cancelled due to parent-teacher conferences. On one or two Saturdays each month, students meet at the school for field trips to local arts events, the zoo, and other attractions.

The extended day program is coordinated with the regular day academic program (but the academic program does not reinforce extended day programming). The extended day coordinator and the school's curriculum specialist meet weekly with teachers at every grade level, and folders are used to track the academic course work and progress of each child. A variety of exercises and activities are provided to complement and emphasize regular academic learning, and link to Minnesota graduation standards.

Unfortunately, attendance remains low and has actually decreased over the past few years. According to a report issued by evaluator Lange on extended day programs, an average of 159 students (30%) attended extended day activities three or more times a week at Dayton's Bluff during the 1998-00 school years.

### Family Resource Room

The Family Resource Room coordinates many of the programs and services focused on family involvement and support. It links parents to on-site resources, provides information regarding how to support their children's education, offers adult education programs, and provides referrals for employment and social services located off-site. In addition, opportunities are sometimes available for volunteering, training, support groups, and other meetings addressing family needs and concerns. There are approximately 40 organizations supplying services and resources from the community including housing and employment services, community colleges, the police department, and youth programs. Family resources provided at locations on-site include physical exams conducted by a nurse practitioner, mental health counseling provided by a psychologist, a Hmong outreach worker, and a school counselor who conducts peer mediation and crisis intervention in classrooms.

### Special Projects

Project KOFI helps develop conflict resolution skills and self-esteem among African-American boys in grades 3-6 who exhibit seriously disruptive behavior problems. Activities involve individual and group counseling, extra tutoring services, special family events with African American themes, and family counseling.

### Staff Development

A curriculum specialist was recently hired to help coordinate extended-day activities with classroom instruction. Staff frequently remark that substantial changes are expected of teachers with insufficient time and resources to accommodate and support such changes. Approximately \$1,500 per professional staff member was allocated to address professional development needs. However, it is not evident that teachers are receiving the extra time and support necessary to cope successfully with new demands.

### Personal and social well-being

Mental health counseling includes individual and group sessions. Consultation with teachers about specific students' problems in the classroom is also provided

## **Degree and Cost of Implementation**

Achievement Plus is well into its third year of implementation. In an effort to increase progress toward the primary goal of increasing student achievement, a *comprehensive school reform model* was recently adopted. Management identified site level needs resulting in the selection of America's Choice School Reform Model. The nine Comprehensive School Reform Components associated with this model consist of (1) Research-based methods (2) Comprehensive design with aligned components (3) Professional development (4) Measurable goals (5) Support within school (6) Parental and community involvement (7) External technical support and assistance (8) Evaluation strategies (9) Coordination of resources. According to the *SCIP report*, Dayton's Bluff received a \$550,000 CSRD grant to implement America's Choice. Implementation began in summer of 2000.

It is not clearly indicated in the SCIP timeline what stage of implementation the identified organizational and program activities are in, or whether or not they were actually implemented at all. A large number of activities and projects are described, but it is unclear which are ongoing and which are new (or merely planned). There is no indication as to how often specific projects and activities will be monitored, and related outcome indicators measured. At a more fundamental level, there seems to be a logical disconnect between the activities implemented and the desired outcomes (e.g., The retreat designed to transition new members to the site-based council, and ongoing efforts to recruit diverse representation, is linked to a desired outcome of an increase in student achievement by 2 stanines.)



## Goals, Indicators, Performance Targets, and Outcomes

According to the *1998 Achievement Plus Evaluation Summary* section describing evaluation approaches and strategies for Achievement Plus, desired student and family outcomes were determined through a consensus building process. Target goals were established by partner representatives and members of the site committees in each community. Detailed information on this process was unavailable.

**Note:**

- Unless otherwise noted, information is from the Achievement Plus 1998-1999 Evaluation Summary
- Cohort groups will be followed to determine progress in each of these areas.

\* Indicates the Partners have chosen these outcomes as a priority for 1997-1999 school years.

<i><b>GOALS</b></i>	<i><b>OBJECTIVES</b></i>	<i><b>INDICATORS AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS</b></i>
<p><i><b>Improvement in the following areas:</b></i></p> <p><u>Desired Student Outcomes</u></p> <p><i><b>1. Academic Achievement</b></i></p> <p><i><b>2. Presence and Participation</b></i></p>	<p><i><b>1. Competence in reading*, math, and writing</b></i></p> <p><i><b>2. Presence in school*;</b></i></p>	<p><i><b>5 year goals:</b></i></p> <p><i><b>1. <u>Metropolitan Achievement Test</u> (MAT 7) --- Normal distribution on test scores(similar to that of national norm group. Average annual growth of 4 normal curve equivalents (NCE) in reading and math. (This is considered more than one year's academic growth.)</b></i></p> <p><i><b><u>MN Comprehensive Assessments</u> --- This goal was supposed to have been set upon review of the 1998 baseline scores.</b></i></p> <p><i><b>2. Attendance Rates; Mobility Rates; Extended Day</b></i></p>

	Participation in extended day learning activities*	<p>Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 10% of students absent 15 days or more.</li> <li>• Less than 5% absent 10-14 days.</li> <li>• 50% of students participate in extended day at least 3 days/week</li> <li>• 75% of students whose MAT 7 scores are in the first 3 stanines participate at least 3 days/week</li> </ul> <p><b>(1998 Evaluation Highlights)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 15% of students will miss 10 days or more</li> <li>• Less than 10% will miss 15 days or more.</li> <li>• To reach these goals, absence rates would need to be cut in half by 2001-02 school year.</li> </ul>
3. Personal and Social Adjustment	3. Resiliency skills; School responsibility behaviors; Positive academic self-concept; Respect for cultural and individual differences.	<p>3. Resiliency Measure, School Attitude Measure, School Climate Survey</p> <p>These goals were supposed to have been set upon completion of baseline surveys (May/June 1998)</p>
4. Contribution and Citizenship	<p>4. Engagement in the civic process</p> <p>Compliance with school and community rules</p>	<p>4. Service Project Records: 100% participation in service activities at least once/year</p> <p>Discipline Reports, Neighborhood Crime Reports: This goal was supposed to have been set after tracking</p>

5. Physical Health	5. Health Life Choices; Management of Health Decisions	indicator during the 1998-1999 school year.
6. Stakeholder Satisfaction	6. Satisfaction with community learning experience	5. Health Survey: This goal was supposed to have been set after tracking indicator during the 1998-1999 school year.
<u>Desired Family Outcomes</u>		6. School Climate Survey: This goal was supposed to have been set upon completion of baseline surveys. (May/June 1998)
1. Family Support	1. Family Access to resources to meet basic needs	1. Parent Involvement Survey, Health Survey  This goal will be set upon completion of baseline surveys. (May/June, 1998)
2. Family Involvement	2. Parent engagement in student learning*; Communication between home and school	2. Parent Involvement Survey  This goal will be set upon completion of baseline survey. (May/June, 1998)

<p>3. Stakeholder Satisfaction</p>	<p>3. Satisfaction with community learning experience</p>	<p>3. Enrollment of Families in School Attendance Area: This goal will be set upon review by site teams (Fall, 1998).</p> <p>School Climate Survey: This goal will be set upon completion of baseline survey. (May/June, 1998)</p>
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## OUTCOMES

### *(1.) In the area of Academic Achievement*

**Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) Scores** (<http://cfl.state.mn.us/GRAD/results>)

<b>Dayton's Bluff Grade 3 Reading</b>	<b>Level I &lt; 1279</b>	<b>Level II 1280-1499</b>	<b>Level III 1500-1689</b>	<b>Level IV &gt;1690</b>
Average Scale Score for all Students Tested 1997-1998	1213			
Average Scale Score for all Students Tested 1998-1999	1261			
Average Scale Score for all Students Tested 1999-2000	1187			

<b>Dayton's Bluff Grade 3 Math</b>	<b>Level I &lt; 1209</b>	<b>Level II 1210-1499</b>	<b>Level III 1500-1739</b>	<b>Level IV &gt;1740</b>
Average Scale Score for all Students Tested 1997-1998		1216		
Average Scale Score for all Students Tested 1998-1999		1262		
Average Scale Score for all Students Tested 1999-2000	1202			

<b>Dayton's Bluff Grade 5 Reading</b>	<b>Level I &lt; 1259</b>	<b>Level II 1260-1499</b>	<b>Level III 1500-1709</b>	<b>Level IV &gt;1710</b>
Average Scale Score for all Students Tested 1997-1998	1233			
Average Scale Score for all Students Tested 1998-1999	1237			
Average Scale Score for all Students Tested 1999-2000	1229			

<b>Dayton's Bluff Grade 5 Math</b>	<b>Level I &lt; 1239</b>	<b>Level II 1240-1499</b>	<b>Level III 1500-1709</b>	<b>Level IV &gt;1710</b>
Average Scale Score for all Students Tested 1997-1998	1210			
Average Scale Score for all Students Tested 1998-1999	1208			
Average Scale Score for all Students Tested 1999-2000	1220			

**The chart on the following page compares Dayton's Bluff and SPPS MCA scores:**

- The 1999 and 2000 MCA Grade 5 Math and Grade 5 Reading Scores at Dayton's Bluff did not meet the Expected Yearly Progress standards as determined by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning for each school. Because these standards were not achieved for two consecutive years, grade 5 math and reading were identified as "Needs Improvement". This list was released for the first time January 2001.

**Fall 1996 - Spring 2000 MAT 7 test results** (Department of Children, Families, and Learning web site).

The MAT 7 measures how students perform in math, reading, science and other subjects compared to a national sample. The MAT 7 is designed so that a typical school should expect about 23 percent of its students in the "below average" category, about 54 percent to test "average" and 23 percent "above average" - approximately a normal distribution curve. In St. Paul, students in grades 2 through 10 are tested.

St. Paul is transitioning to a spring only MAT 7 testing schedule beginning in 2001. The 2000 school year was the first time students were tested in the spring, and a different form of the standardized test was used than in the previous exam. Also, testing in the fall and spring results in students having only six months between tests, which means that expected growth would be less than from spring to spring. These two factors tend to complicate interpretations of growth.

#### **Dayton's Bluff MAT7 Percent in each Stanine Level**

\*Spring 2000 includes students tested in the same school fall 1999 and spring 2000 grades 2-6

	Fall 1996	Fall 1997	Fall 1998	Fall 1999	Spring 2000*
<b>Number Tested</b>	295	295	327	273	266
<b>% Below Average (Stanines 1-3)</b>	64.1	55.3	63.3	57.1	64.7
<b>% Average (Stanines 4-6)</b>	31.2	39.0	33.3	39.2	32.3
<b>% Above Average (Stanines 7-9)</b>	4.7	5.8	3.4	3.7	3.0

In the report *Achievement Plus Outcome Evaluation Results for Dayton's Bluff 1997-2000*, similar results are given, but track a cohort (N= 77, N= 83) that included students in grades 2-4 during 1997-98 who remained enrolled at the school from fall 1997 through spring 2000, and took the MAT 7 at the school in fall 1997, 1998, 1999, and spring 2000. Unlike the district scores, this measure is more an indication of individual student growth over a period of time.

### MAT 7 Total Reading Results (Stanine Scores)

Number tested = 77	Fall 1997	Fall 1998	Fall 1999	Spring 2000
<b>Below Average</b>	60%	56%	61%	66%
<b>Average</b>	36%	39%	36%	30%
<b>Above Average</b>	4%	5%	3%	4%

### MAT 7 Total Math Results (Stanine Scores)

Number tested = 83	Fall 1997	Fall 1998	Fall 1999	Spring 2000
<b>Below Average</b>	41%	35%	39%	42%
<b>Average</b>	49%	52%	48%	51%
<b>Above Average</b>	10%	13%	13%	7%

For the same cohort, NCE (national curve equivalency) scores were calculated based on MAT 7 reading and math scores. A four-point gain is considered at least one year's academic growth. 50 is the national mean.

	1997	1998	1999	2000
<b>READING</b>				
Mean	32.5	32.4	32.2	28.9
Standard deviation	(17.1)	(18.8)	(19.1)	(16.4)
<b>MATH</b>				
Mean	40.4	42.6	41.4	39.7
Standard deviation	(18.3)	(21.4)	(19.7)	(16.8)

Information from the St. Paul School District reports different NCE averages. This number could easily vary according to the number and type of students tested. According to an April 2000 report titled *Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Continuous School Improvement*,

The overall trend in MAT 7 data as reported by the Office of Accountability from 1996-1999 in reading is slightly up with a mean NCE of 30.6 to a mean NCE of 31.3. Data for mathematics from 1996 to 1999 indicates a slight improvement with a mean NCE of 34.6 to a mean NCE of 37.2. Following cohorts of students over time indicates mixed student achievement. A detail follows:

**Dayton's Bluff Fall 1999 MAT7 Mean NCE Scores by Grade Level for stable students**

Grade	Reading Mean NCE				Math Mean NCE			
	96	97	98	99	96	97	98	99
3	N/A	N/A	34.71	35.76	N/A	N/A	34.36	46.60
4	N/A	37.10	37.83	35.34	N/A	41.43	48.99	51.91
5	30.50	33.39	30.81	33.62	32.18	45.15	40.19	40.57
6	33.36	30.38	35.15	32.86	43.82	43.71	48.64	43.07

- Dayton's Bluff does not appear to be on track for meeting the performance target set for MAT 7 test scores.
- Although a specific performance target was not set for the MCA's, progress does not appear to be satisfactory for this indicator. It is difficult to perceive a trend however, with only 3 years data.

***(2.) In the area of Presence and Participation***

**Participation in Extended Day Programs**

According to a research paper by Daniel Mueller and Cheryl Lange, *Extended Day Participation and Academic Achievement Among Urban Elementary School Students*, the first full year of extended day programming occurred during the 1998-1999 school year. During this year, the morning program was offered for 161 days and the afternoon program for 127 days, out of 173 school days, with an average daily attendance of 135 (unduplicated across morning and afternoon programs).

The table below, from *Achievement Plus Outcome Evaluation Results For Dayton's Bluff 1997-2000*, indicates the attendance rates for 1999-2000 school year:

**Extended Day Attendance 1999-2000 School Year Totals**

Attendance	Morning Program	Afternoon Program	Morning & Afternoon unduplicated
Total # days offered	136	130	136
Students attending at least one day	365	366	495
Average number students attending each day	55	130	156
Range in number students attending each day	28-98	95-179	28-200



Average number days per student	20.6	46.0	43.0
Percent students attending 50% or more of days	7%	28%	24%
Percent students attending 75% or more of days	3%	13%	11%

### **Extended Day Participation and Academic Achievement**

In Mueller and Lange's paper, results are given for the 1998-1999 school year. This type of analysis is important, but the data presented are not adequately described, and as a result, potentially misleading. *The Achievement Plus Outcome Evaluation Results for Dayton's Bluff 1997-2000* reports results on the relationship between extended day participation and progress in academic achievement for the 1999-2000 school year. In both reports, results are given for all students in reading and math, and for students scoring below average in reading and math in the fall of 1999.

More information is needed about the characteristics of the groups of students tested, as they relate to the actual data. Are students attending the most days typically performing the worst on tests? How do these statistics break down demographically? Did they attend morning and afternoon sessions? Another factor that throws the data into question is the large standard deviations. In some cases they are more than double the value of the mean; consequently, these means would essentially equal zero. Also the categories chosen for days of attendance are completely arbitrary. Is the child attending 26 days a year categorically different than a child attending 25 days a year?

Statistics (from Mueller and Lange's paper) for the 1998-1999 school year follow:

### **Change in MAT Total Reading Scores by Extended Day Attendance: All Students**

Number of Days Attended Extended Day: 1998-99	Number of Students	Fall 1998 NCE Score		NCE Difference Score 1998-1999		Percentage Improving*
		Mean	(S.D.)	Mean	(S.D.)	
0	25	35.3	(24.2)	5.3	(12.2)	52%
1-25	55	26.7	(15.2)	0.3	(11.9)	33%
26-76	41	32.9	(17.3)	-1.2	(8.6)	24%
76 or more	43	31.4	(16.8)	1.1	(10.7)	44%
Total	164	30.8	(17.9)	0.9	(11.0)	37%

\*Refers to students having a 4.00 or more gain in NCE score from fall 1998 to fall 1999.

### **Change in MAT Total Reading Scores by Extended Day Attendance: Students With Below Average Reading Scores**

Number of Days Attended Extended Day: 1998-99	Number of Students	Fall 1998 NCE Score		NCE Difference Score 1998-1999		Percentage Improving*
		Mean	(S.D.)	Mean	(S.D.)	
0	14	17.8	(9.6)	9.1	(9.1)	71%
1-25	38	18.7	(9.5)	1.4	(12.8)	37%
26-76	19	17.4	(9.2)	-3.5	(7.2)	16%

76 or more	28	21.3	(8.6)	1.8	(9.8)	46%
Total	99	19.1	(9.2)	1.7	(11.0)	40%

\*Refers to students having a 4.00 or more gain in NCE score from fall 1998 to fall 1999.

The following statistics are from the *Achievement Plus Outcome Evaluation Results For Dayton's Bluff 1997-2000*. The data is from the 1999-2000 school year. This is the first year the MAT 7 test was given in the fall and the spring. These results can't be directly compared to previous tests that measured growth from fall to fall. These results for spring 2000 serve as benchmark data for future comparisons.

### **Change in MAT Total Reading Scores by Extended Day Attendance: All Students**

Number of Days Attended Extended Day: 1999-2000	Number of Students	Fall 1999 NCE Score Mean (S.D.)	Spring 2000 NCE Score Mean (S.D.)	NCE Difference Score 1999-2000 Mean (S.D.)	Percentage Improving*
0	39	31.8 (21.6)	29.7 (18.1)	-2.1 (9.1)	26%
1-25	78	32.2 (17.3)	31.5 (17.2)	-0.8 (10.4)	24%
26-76	66	30.1 (19.8)	27.4 (17.0)	-2.6 (10.5)	24%
76 or more	54	31.1 (19.0)	27.2 (14.9)	-3.8 (10.6)	20%
Total	237	31.3 (19.0)	29.1 (16.8)	-2.2 (10.3)	24%

\*Refers to students having a 4.00 or more gain in NCE score from fall 1999 to spring 2000.

### **Change in MAT Total Reading Scores by Extended Day Attendance: Students With Below Average Reading Scores**

Number of Days Attended Extended Day: 1999-2000	Number of Students	Fall 1999 NCE Score Mean (S.D.)	Spring 2000 NCE Score Mean (S.D.)	NCE Difference Score 1999-2000 Mean (S.D.)	Percentage Improving*
0	22	16.7 (9.4)	18.1 (8.8)	1.4 (8.2)	36%
1-25	44	19.9 (9.7)	21.5 (9.8)	1.6 (9.7)	32%
26-76	37	15.7 (8.9)	17.2 (8.9)	1.6 (9.1)	38%
76 or more	32	18.1 (9.6)	18.8 (9.0)	0.7 (8.9)	31%
Total	135	17.8 (9.4)	19.1 (9.3)	1.3 (9.0)	34%

\*Refers to students having a 4.00 or more gain in NCE score from fall 1999 to spring 2000.

Summary of outcomes from Mueller and Lange's paper:

- Dayton's Bluff has not made progress toward goals in extended day participation during the past year.
- According to several analyses, increased extended day attendance was not linked to higher academic gains in reading and math.
- There were no statistically significant correlations between extended day attendance and academic achievement in any demographic group (results mentioned but not included in report).
- There was no significant difference in academic gains at Dayton's Bluff and Monroe when contrasted to comparison schools that did not offer extended day programs.

## **School Attendance**

The following table is from the *1998 Achievement Plus Evaluation Summary*:

<b>Percent of Students Absent (St. Paul Public Schools Attendance Records) Dayton's Bluff 1996-97 School Year</b>	
Absent 10-20 days	22%
Absent 21 or more days	11%

The following table is from the *1997-1998 Evaluation Highlights* document:

<b>Percentage of Students with High Absence Rates - 1997-98 School Year</b>		
	Dayton's Bluff School	St. Paul School District
10 or more days	35%	28%
15 or more days	21%	15%

**Note:** Only students who were enrolled at Dayton's Bluff 160 or more days during the 1997-98 school year are included.

This was the only school attendance data available through Achievement Plus reports, documents, and evaluations.

- To reach the attendance rate goals stated in the *1998 Evaluation Highlights*, the absence rates would need to be cut by more than half.

### ***(3.) In the Area of Contribution and Citizenship***

#### Discipline Reports:

According to the 1998 Evaluation Summary:

<b>Dayton's Bluff 1996-1997 school year</b>	
Reported Suspensions	1
Reported Expulsions	0

According to the SCIP 2000-2001 Report (pg. 5):

<b>Dayton's Bluff 2000-2001 school year</b>	
Reported Suspensions	42
Reported Dismissals	136

- These figures should be further investigated.

## **Conclusion:**

The overarching goal of the Achievement Plus initiative is raising academic achievement. The other specified goals are designed to support families and students in accomplishing this main goal. Two basic approaches are emphasized in the Achievement Plus model: offering comprehensive, integrated social services to support students and families, and increasing family and community involvement in the education process. One major premise of the initiative, as stated in the 1998 Evaluation, is that "community involvement and empowerment are essential elements necessary for students and families to meet the desired outcomes." Much of the data obtained for this report, as well as the lack of available data on family outcomes, suggest that the family and community involvement component has not been effectively implemented, measured, or reported. Furthermore, much of the material issued by Achievement Plus implies that family support and family involvement are the same thing. Involvement of the community is often considered only in the context of providing programs and services, rather than as collaborative partnerships.

Outreach and partnership activities are hampered by poorly defined family and community objectives that shift and have different shades of meaning from one context to the next. It seems there is no broad consensus on the meaning of family and community involvement. Consequently, it can be measured in a multitude of ways, and almost any outcomes can be justified. Likewise, stakeholder satisfaction is not adequately measured for any group. Available data imply that family and community involvement in decision-making processes, and participation in activities that increase a sense of ownership and commitment to Dayton's Bluff are not key goals of the project. Teacher, staff, and community partner satisfaction is also not a central concern. This is very much a top-down management approach to human services and education, rather than a bottom-up participatory approach. If the ideal is to be both, then Achievement Plus has neglected the second half of the equation. What remains is a top down bureaucracy imposed on the organizational and educational structure of the school. Although Dayton's Bluff offers good programs and services, such as extended day programming, and support services for parents and students, academic outcomes have continued to worsen. The reasons for the decline may also be connected with other factors, such as high mobility and lack of management accountability among key partners, but either way, a more vigorous and consistent approach to community involvement is essential for improving student and family outcomes.

School climate or school culture is an important related issue at Dayton's Bluff. Persistent and extensive problems in this area have been reported. This issue raises several questions. How effectively can the new curriculum model (Americas Choice Comprehensive School Reform Model - CSRM) raise student achievement if school culture is a consistent problem? What can be done to create a climate of school and community ownership and involvement as opposed to a "client" mentality? How much impact can social services have on educational achievement in community schools if genuine family and community involvement, and staff commitment remain minimal? If these issues are not resolved soon, the school climate at Dayton's Bluff could further erode educational outcomes despite implementation of the CSRM, and the best efforts of teachers and staff. It remains to be seen whether or not the CSRM, and other planned improvements at Dayton's Bluff, will be able to significantly affect student outcomes in the near future.